

## **If You've Gotta Go, Go Now by Luddleston**

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**Summary:**

It's been too long since Krem's seen Bull, and he shouldn't be this bothered by it, this on edge, shouldn't *miss* him this much.

He shouldn't, but he does.

## If You've Gotta Go, Go Now

### Author's Note:

- For [CharismaticAlpaca](#).

Eh, I missed writing Krem. He's my favorite <3 something about his voice, I guess, he's sweet and blunt at the same time... somehow.

Normally, his armor fit like a second skin, but today, it weighed unusually heavy on his shoulders, like every pound of metal and leather on his body was working to press his body to the ground.

The issue was exhaustion, primarily—the Chargers had been on the road for almost three weeks now, and they were still a half-day's walk out from the nearest Inquisition camp (where they were supposed to meet up with the Inquisitor, and more importantly, the Iron Bull). Everyone was lacking a little of their usual energy; Dalish hadn't sung anything since yesterday, and the way Skinner dispatched that last group of bandits was lackluster at best. Some of them held up okay, like Grim, who hadn't complained much, but they were still moving at a slower pace than usual, and the new recruits Bull had hired out of the Inquisition's bevy of soldiers were particularly disgruntled.

All in all, it wasn't the worst shape they'd been in. Sure, his voice was cracked on the edges from yelling orders, and his left shoulder was sore all the way through from fighting. Always the left. Probably because that was the one he rested his maul on as they made their way through the bedraggled plains of the Dales.

"We're not far now," Dalish said, but Krem knew this place was haunted for her, it was in her eyes. And in the fact that she'd been sticking even closer to Skinner than usual, always in arm's reach of her lover.

He'd've thought it was pretty cute if he hadn't caught them doing it on the war table a few weeks back, or maybe if he wasn't aching a little with how long it had been since he'd had someone to steady him when he started to

get bent out of shape. He didn't like admitting he missed people, not his family back in Tevinter, and sure as hell not the Bull.

But damn. It had been months.

"You think we should stop?" he asked Stitches privately, their heads leaned together as they made their way under a rocky outcropping that provided at least some shade and shelter from the winds that whipped the scent of old ash all over the Exalted Plains. "Pick things back up in the morning?"

"Not if you don't want to," Stitches said, and Krem knew that just meant "no," because obviously he didn't want to.

"This isn't about me, it's about the Chargers," Krem said. "I mean, shit, of course I want to see him, but."

"You know if we don't make it to the Inquisition's camp tonight, they're going to move on. It'll be, what. Another three weeks before we're all back at Skyhold," Stitches reminded him. Stitches didn't need to remind him.

"Fuck," Krem said, and it would've been more vehement if he wasn't so damn tired.

"You could go on ahead," Stitches suggested.

"That'd be shitty of me as acting commander," Krem said, rolling his shoulder. He glanced behind himself at the rest of the group, trailing along steadily. Sure, there was precedent for what they'd do if Krem was away—Stitches was good at keeping everything under control, and they were all too worn out to give anyone shit. They had enough supplies to make camp for one more night, and then Krem could head off for the Inquisition camp and probably get there faster on his own; in theory, it would work.

But he'd feel guilty about it, and Bull would give him that *look*, the one that meant, *we talked about this, we decided being involved wasn't going to affect the Chargers*. Fair's fair, of course, Krem gave Bull the look plenty of times, like when Bull got the Inquisitor to go back to Skyhold even though it wasn't entirely necessary, just because the Chargers were there.

“Then we’ll keep going,” Stitches said, with a shrug. Krem looked over his shoulder again. “They’ll be fine with it.”

“I’m just trying to—“

“It’s okay. That you love him this much.”

Krem looked at Stitches like he’d given him a bitter potion instead of a word of advice. “*Venhedis*, I don’t *love him*,” he said. Stitches backed off, because he knew Krem well enough to know that if he was swearing in Tevene, he was genuinely pissed. He wasn’t like that altus who threw out their native profanities like they were the same thing as all the everyday swearing they did. Although, he supposed, his mouth was a lot dirtier than the altus’s because he was a mercenary, not whatever the hell Dorian was.

“So we’re gonna keep going?”

“Yeah,” Krem said. He scrubbed at the back of his neck where he was sweating. He was sweating under his armor, too—even though it was only springtime, the constant sun was hot—but he just put up with that.

Krem knew, objectively, that there were times he’d been more exhausted than this. On the run from Tevinter soldiers, that time he’d stayed awake from three days doing surveillance on that Orlesian manor, that time he and Bull were stupid enough to test the precise limits of their sexual stamina. He remembered all of them as being worse than this, but somehow, that didn’t make him any less wiped by the time they saw the torches of the Inquisition camp in the distance.

A few of the boys cheered at the sight. Krem was pretty sure his voice would crack, so he didn’t.

He wasn’t the first one to reach the camp, and by the time he actually did get there, he saw Dalish pestering a very irate-looking Dorian, who seemed like he’d probably been trying to have a *moment* with the Inquisitor. It was late enough that the scouts were in their tents, but Dorian and their intrepid boss were sitting by a dying fire, now joined by half the Chargers.

“Where’s Bull?” Krem asked the Inquisitor, without any preface, hoping it wasn’t too blunt of him. Trevelyan could be pretty damn blunt himself, though.

“In his tent, last I checked.”

“Thanks,” Krem said, and he dropped his maul with a *thunk* outside of the tent Trevelyan had gestured at, wasting no time in stripping off his armor. Ordinarily, he would’ve piled it up neatly inside, but it wasn’t gonna rain anytime soon, so it was decently safe for him to leave it in a messy sprawl outside. Once he was inside the tent, he stripped his shirt off too, a little annoyed by the feeling of half-tried sweat running down his spine, but not enough to clean it up.

Bull wasn’t asleep; Krem knew he was too light a sleeper to have not been woken up by his entire company stomping through the camp, but he looked like he was out cold, breathing slow, limbs loose. He betrayed himself by opening his eye as soon as Krem sat down beside him.

“Hey,” Bull said, and Krem let out all his breath in one slow movement as he laid down next to Bull, felt one huge arm settling over his side. Bull had propped himself up on his elbow so he didn’t scrape a hole in the floor of the tent with his horn when he pulled Krem close to him and buried his face in Krem’s hair.

“Hey,” Krem said back, laying his hand on Bull’s back, his fingers a little raw and over-warm.

“Almost didn’t think you’d make it,” Bull said. Bull probably knew Krem had thought that too.

Krem kissed him firmly, didn’t give a shit when he split open his already-cracked lip on Bull’s teeth. All of him felt brittle, like he was stiff all over but enough pressure would split his whole body open the way his lip just had. At least the scabs were old enough that he wasn’t bleeding.

“Stitches says I love you,” Krem said suddenly, unexpectedly, as soon as they parted. There it was—he’d burst at the seams.

Bull looked at him quizzically, and Krem knew he wasn't *laughing*, but he sure was chuckling a little, shoulders shaking, grin gleaming in the dark. "Wait, Stitches says *he* loves me, or he says *you* love me?"

"He says I do, you ass," Krem said, punching Bull in the shoulder, but it didn't have much force, because there was no way he could muster the strength to actually bruise.

"Is he right?" Bull asked.

"He's usually right."

"Mm-hm." Bull rolled onto his back and tugged Krem against his side, so Krem could lay his head on Bull's chest.

"I just. I don't know why I said that. I know Qunari don't do that whole thing," he said.

"Well, you're not Qunari. And I'm not... well, not anymore, you know," Bull said, clearing his throat as punctuation. "I don't mind if you love me."

"Well, thank fuck." Although it was mostly sarcasm, the relief managed to come through too.

"I probably love you a little bit, too," Bull said.

"Probably?"

"Well, yeah. I missed you."

"I missed you too," Krem said, but it was muffled by his face pressed to Bull's shoulder. He could hear the camp settling down outside, and he put his arm around Bull's chest and Bull rested his hand low on Krem's back, fingers idly rubbing circles on one of the places he always dug his thumbs into when Krem was sore. Pressure points, or some shit, according to Bull, and Krem didn't really understand how, but it always worked.

"We should get some sleep," Bull said.

“Yeah, but,” and then Krem yawned so wide his jaw popped, “then you’ll somehow manage to disappear in the morning before I’m even awake and I won’t see you ’til we’re back at Skyhold in three weeks.”

“I’ll wake you up when I go,” Bull promised.

Krem didn’t entirely believe him. And even so, there was still that three-week gap looming between tomorrow morning and when they’d finally be back at Skyhold with the familiar tavern and Bull’s stupidly huge bed that he’d somehow convinced the ambassador to get for him. Krem huffed a little sigh against Bull’s chest.

“I’ll kick your ass next time I see you if you don’t wake me up,” he said.

“I’d like to see you try,” Bull said.

“I’ve done it before.”

“That was a fluke.”

“No, that was me, a tiny human, *kicking your damn ass.*”

“Go to sleep, Krem.”

“Fuck you,” Krem said, then, because he wasn’t a total dick, “goodnight.”

He was asleep before Bull's breath evened out.

Krem woke up to Bull’s stubble tickling the side of his neck as Bull left lingering kisses from the space behind Krem’s ear to the curve of his shoulder. “If you’re trying to get me up,” Krem said, “you’re only convincing me to stay in bed.” He could feel the shape of Bull’s smile against his skin, could even feel his scars if he concentrated.

“Oh yeah?”

He hummed gently, shifting back until he was cuddled closer to the Bull’s warm bulk. “Yeah. I’m all cozy now.” Bull sucked on his skin, his lips and tongue and teeth bruising Krem’s skin, marginally paler here where his

armor didn't cover, especially compared to his face and hands, which were tanned dark brown from the constant sun. "Leaving a mark I can remember you by?"

"Mm-hm." Bull left gentler kisses after the bruising set in. "It'll be gone next time I see you, but."

"I'm sure I'll have plenty of other bruising to think about," Krem said. But those wouldn't have been ones Bull gave him, and he would grimace when he felt them instead of smiling lazily like he was now.

"Boss wants us to head out soon," said Bull, and Krem's lazy smile thinned and faded. He scrubbed at his eyes and then mumbled a series of obscenities into his palm, subconsciously hoping that if he buried his face, he'd bury anything that made him remember exactly how early the Inquisitor liked to get moving.

"I'm gonna go back to sleep," Krem said, just so that Bull wouldn't have to actually say goodbye to him.

"Yeah." Bull trailed his knuckles up Krem's side. "You wanna mess around before I have to go?"

Krem felt Bull's hand span his back as he sighed. "Not really."

"Okay." Bull didn't sound offended, he never sounded offended when Krem (or anyone else) said no to sex. It made Krem realize every time, just a little, that Bull was asking to benefit Krem, not himself, that kind of misplaced politeness Krem never really understood. "I'm gonna go."

"Yeah, alright."

He vaguely heard Bull get up and shuffle around the tent, picking up his supplies. Krem didn't have to get out so Bull could take the tent down—the Inquisition scouts would tear down the camp after everyone else was gone. He was a little more awake than he normally was that early, because his brain was cataloguing everything Bull did, comparing it to what he knew from years of sharing a tent with him. He moved slower when he crouched



—his knee hurt. He was quieter than usual, like he was trying specifically to let Krem sleep (usually, when they woke up at the same time, Bull just poked around at him until his brain kicked on).

Eventually, though, he drifted back to sleep, and didn't wake again until he heard Dalish singing something rude outside. Bull had left Krem's armor neatly piled up inside of the tent, which was about as close to a love letter as anyone could get from him, and Dalish said something he couldn't remember about the way he was smiling as he left the tent.

"Three weeks, right?" said Skinner, who Krem hadn't expected to care.

"Yeah," he replied, and he didn't feel like he was *too* fucked.

Yet.